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ABSTRACT

The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) of Travis County, Texas, serves students aged 10 to 17 who have been expelled from the Travis County, Luling, and Gonzalez school districts under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code for serious offenses such as felony drug possession, assault, or weapons possession. The program provides daily instruction and supervision for students placed there. The goals are to provide an effective education program and to help students achieve behavioral and academic improvement. Data for the evaluation reported in this document include participant demographic, academic, and behavioral indicators. In the 1997-98 school year, the JJAEP served 55 students, of whom 61.8% had been referred for discretionary offenses and the remainder for mandatory offenses. The 1997-98 school year was the first in which students could be sent to the program for discretionary offenses. The average attendance rate for JJAEP students during the 1997-98 school year was 79%. Almost one-third of the participants had a special education classification. Although there were average gains on the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test over the school year for participants, most were still in the low performance range, with mandatory students more likely to be in the average performance range than the discretionary students. Few if any conclusions could be drawn from data from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, since so many students were exempt from this examination. An examination of discipline data showed that only one student returned to JJAEP, yielding a recidivism rate of 1.8%. Evaluators recommended that a behavioral measure be added to future evaluations to assess students' emotional and behavioral improvement. Other recommendations included facilitating students' returns to their home schools, improving data collection, and following the long-term progress of all JJAEP students. Four appendixes contain excerpts from the Texas Education Code, and tables of JJAEP participant characteristics, academic measures, and behavioral measures. (Contains 16 tables, 6 figures, and 2 references.) (SLD)

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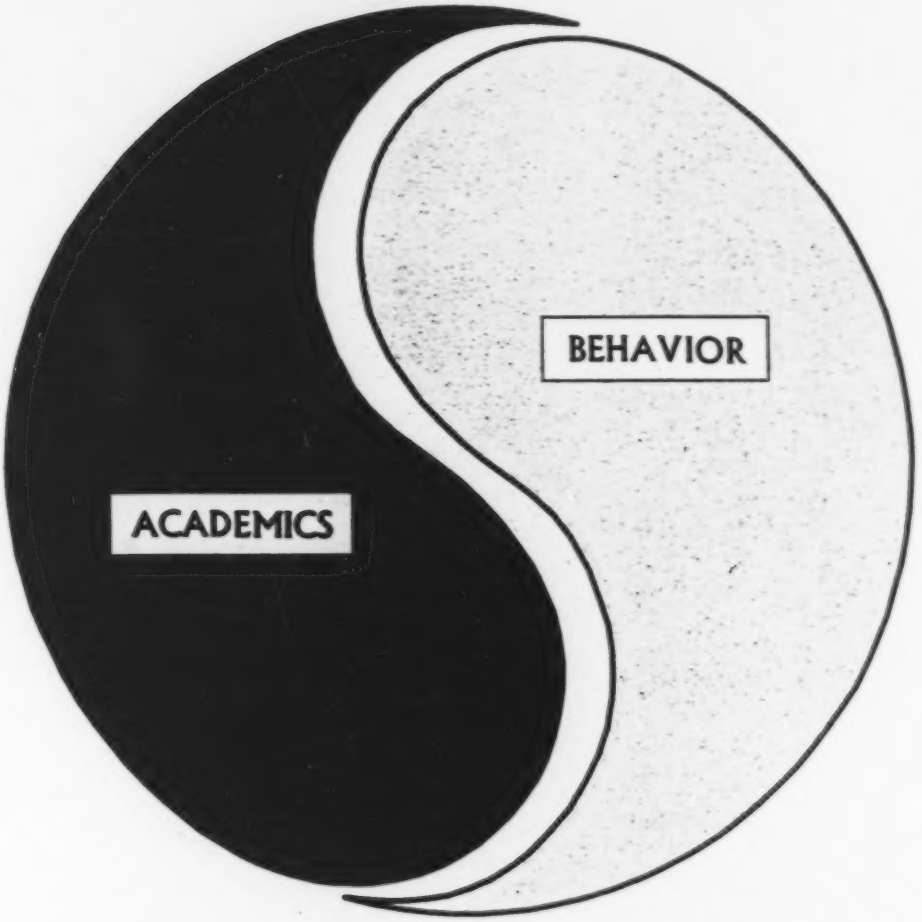
JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT 1997-98



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Austin Independent School District
Office of Program Evaluation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT, 1997-98

Author: Martha Doolittle, Ph.D.

Program Overview

Travis County's Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) serves students (ages 10 to 17) who have been expelled from the Travis County, Luling, and Gonzalez school districts under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code for serious offenses such as felony drug possession, assault, or weapons possession. As required by law, JJAEP provides daily instruction and supervision for students placed there. The goals of the program are twofold: to provide an effective education program for youth, and to help students achieve behavioral and academic improvement.

Budget Implications

Rollover FY1997:	$324,598
FY 1998 Revenues:	$538,583
Unadjusted Total Funding FY1998:	$863,181
Adjustments:	$32,000
Adjusted Total Funding FY1998:	$895,181

Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation is to document academic and behavioral progress of students placed there during 1997-98. The findings are reported to the Travis County Juvenile Court and to the members of the JJAEP Executive Committee, which include representatives from each of the participating school districts. Data for the evaluation include participant demographic, academic and behavioral indicators. Data sources include information obtained from JJAEP and school district student files.

Major Findings

A total of 55 students were served by JJAEP during 1997-98, with 61.8% of the students sent for discretionary offenses (persistent misconduct), and the remainder for mandatory offenses (20% weapons possession, 9.1% felony drug offenses, 5.5% arson, and 3.6% assault). During 1997-98, school districts were allowed for the first time to send students to JJAEP for discretionary offenses.

The average attendance rate for JJAEP students during 1997-98 was 79%, with the shortest removal being 17 days and the longest removal being 181 days. Almost one-third of this year's JJAEP participants had a special education classification. Several academic measures were followed during 1997-98, including the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). Although there were average gains from WIAT pre- to post-tests, a number of students' scores indicated that they were in the low performance range. With few exceptions, average scores for mandatory students were more commonly within the average performance range than were scores for discretionary students. Few conclusions could be made from TAAS data since many scores were unavailable and many students were exempt from the tests (e.g., special education). Examining discipline data, only one 1997-98 JJAEP student returned to JJAEP during the year, yielding a 1.8% recidivism rate.

Recommendations

From the evaluation, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

- Add a behavioral measure to assess students' emotional and behavioral improvement while in the JJAEP.
- Ease student transition back to the home school district by facilitating individual student academic and behavioral plans.
- Streamline data collection from the participating school districts by obtaining written parent permission for data release and clear notification of the types of data needed at the time a student enters JJAEP.
- Track long-term progress of all JJAEP participants.

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INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the State of Texas, the Travis County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) was organized in response to the State legislative mandate issued with the passage of Senate Bill 1 (1995) and Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (amended in 1997 by Senate Bill 133). Appendix A has excerpts from these documents on requirements of a JJAEP.

Located at the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Alternative Learning Center, the JJAEP serves students between the ages of 10 and 17 who are expelled from Travis County, Luling, and Gonzalez school districts under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code. As required by law, the JJAEP conducts a daily instructional program for those students who have been placed there. Each student is under direct supervision and control of either juvenile or adult probation.

Governed by the Travis County Juvenile Board, and with the authority of the Travis County Commissioners Court, the JJAEP is operated according to a contractual agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Travis County Juvenile Board, the Travis County Commissioners Court, the Travis County Juvenile Court Department, Education Service Center Region XIII, and the participating school districts are all parties to the MOU. A JJAEP Executive Committee made up of representatives from each school district, Educational Service Center - Region XIII, and the Travis County Juvenile Court serves in a planning and advisory capacity. The Travis County Juvenile Court Department is responsible for JJAEP operation, with the Manager serving as a program and contract monitor and as a supervisor to the Juvenile Court probation officers on site. The juvenile probation officers provide student supervision and case plans, and facilitate student transition between JJAEP and the home school district. Southwest Key Program, Inc. staff provide the educational and behavioral curriculum to students in JJAEP.

The stated mission of the Travis County JJAEP is as follows:

> "The mission of the Travis County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is to reclaim marginal and "at risk" hard-to-serve youth who are potential dropouts, who have already dropped out of school, who are expelled from school, who have been placed at the JJAEP by their home school district, and/or those who have been adjudicated delinquent by the Juvenile Court or a Municipal Court."

The overarching program goals for the JJAEP are to:

- provide an effective education program for youth who otherwise would not be attending school;
- achieve behavioral and academic improvement for students who are placed in JJAEP.

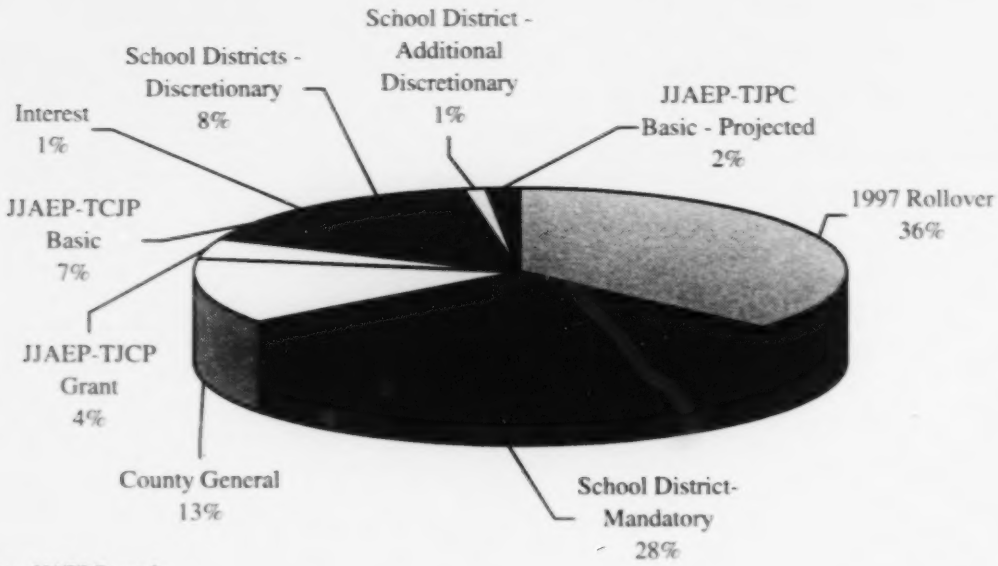
PROGRAM FUNDING

The fiscal year 1998 funding sources (percentage by source) for the JJAEP are shown in Figure 1. There was a $324,598 rollover from fiscal year 1997. Fiscal year 1998 revenues included school district mandatory funds totaling $250,000; a transfer from the Travis County

General Fund of $113,583; JJAEP-TJPC Basic funds (at $53 per mandatory day) totaling $60,000; a JJAEP-TJPC grant of $35,000 for substance abuse prevention; interest income of $5,000; and school district discretionary funds totaling $75,000. Adjustments in revenue funds came from two sources: $15,000 in projected JJAEP-TJPC basic funds, and $10,000 in additional school district discretionary funds. Thus, for the fiscal year 1998, JJAEP funds totaled $895,181.

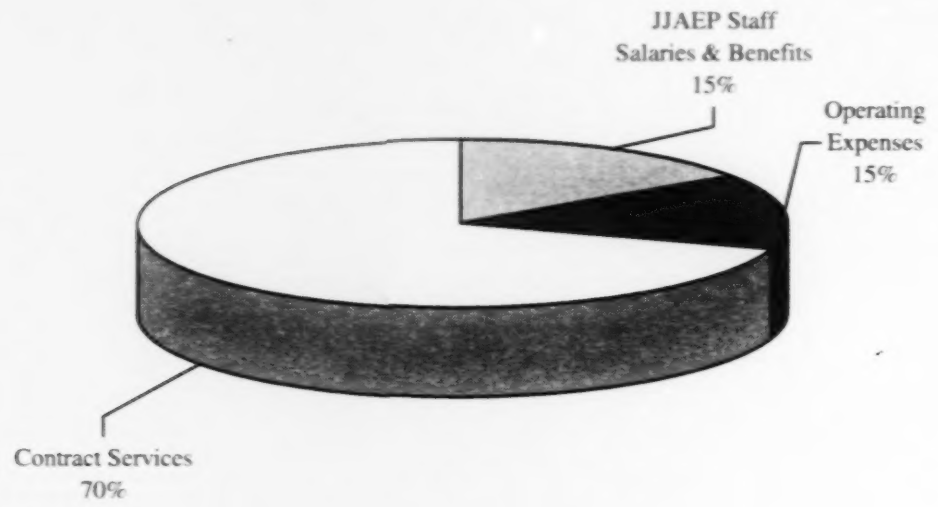
Program expenditures were for JJAEP staff salaries and fringe benefits, operating expenses (i.e., supplies, communication, utilities, rent, transportation, training, equipment), and contract services. Actual expenditures to date (by percentage of expenditures) for fiscal year 1998 are shown in Figure 2. Actual expenditures to date total $895,181. JJAEP staff salaries and benefits to date totaled $138,512. Operating expenditures to date totaled $129,850. Contract service expenditures to date totaled $626,819. Projected expenditures for the remainder of fiscal year 1998 total $668,350. Therefore, the ending balance projected to be carried forward to fiscal year 1999 totals $216,331.

Figure 1: JJAEP Fiscal Year 1998 Funding Sources



Source: JJAEP Records

Figure 2: JJAEP Fiscal Year 1998 To Date Expenditures



Source: JJAEP Records

Evaluation Scope and Method

The purpose of this evaluation is to document the progress of students in the JJAEP and to report findings to the Travis County Juvenile Court and to members of the JJAEP Executive Committee. Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code requires the long-term tracking of academic performance data on students attending a JJAEP in order to determine the effectiveness of the JJAEP in enabling students to perform at grade level. The JJAEP Executive Committee determined what particular program measures would be followed during the year. Using this information, staff from the Austin Independent School District's Office of Program Evaluation agreed to produce a summary evaluation report on the first year's operation of the JJAEP.

Data on the JJAEP were collected from a number of sources, including data provided by participating Travis County school districts and data collected on site while students were attending JJAEP. Southwest Key Program, Inc. was responsible for maintaining a JJAEP student database, from which most program data analysis and evaluation were derived. The main focus of this evaluation was on 1997-98 JJAEP student participants. However, some follow-up data were obtained on students who participated in JJAEP during 1996-97.

Table 1 depicts JJAEP goals, supported by measurable objectives that were assessed using various information sources.

Table 1: JJAEP Program Goals, Objectives, and Information Sources

Program Goals	Measurable Objectives	Information Sources
Academic Goals		
• ***Successful transition to home campus***	Students on target to graduate	TLI* scores, AEIS*
• ***Student on grade level or moving toward grade level***	Improved attendance	Attendance rate, AEIS
	Decrease in dropouts	Dropout rate, AEIS
	Increased reading skills	WIAT* scores
Behavioral Goals		
• ***No new offenses***	Lower recidivism to JJAEP	Enrollment, JJAEP data
	Lower removal rate from home campus to alternative district programs	Removal data, AEIS
Safer Community Environment		
• ***No new offenses***	Lower recidivism to other court placements	Juvenile Online Tracking System

*AEIS = Academic Excellence Indicator System; TLI = Texas Learning Index, based on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills; WIAT = Wechsler Individual Achievement Test.

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JJAEP STUDENTS SERVED

PARTICIPANTS

During the 1997-98 school year, a total of 55 students were served by the JJAEP. Tables 2 and 3 show demographic data on the JJAEP student participants for 1997-98, including gender, ethnicity, and age. Most of the 1997-98 JJAEP participants were males (80%) and 14 to 15 years of age (60%). These characteristics are similar to that of 1996-97 JJAEP participants, as shown in Appendix B (75% males, 27.8% 15 years of age).

Table 2: Gender and Ethnicity of JJAEP Participants, 1997-98

JJAEP 97-98	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Hispanic	27	49.1%	4	7.3%	31	56.4%
Anglo-American	10	18.2%	4	7.3%	14	25.5%
African-American	6	10.9%	3	5.4%	9	16.4%
Other	1	1.8%	0	0%	1	1.8%
Total	44	80%	11	20%	55	100%

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Table 3: Age Distribution of JJAEP Participants, 1997-98

Age	Number	Percent
17	1	1.8%
16	9	16.4%
15	12	21.8%
14	21	38.2%
13	10	18.2%
12	1	1.8%
11	1	1.8%
Total	55	100.0%

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Table 4 indicates the types of offenses for which students were sent to the JJAEP during 1997-98. For the first time during 1997-98, school districts were allowed to send students to the JJAEP for discretionary offenses such as persistent misconduct. This represented the majority of referrals during 1997-98 (34 students, or 61.8%). Other offenses for which students were sent to the JJAEP during 1997-98 were mandatory removal offenses, according to the Texas Education Code, including weapons possession (11 students, or 20%), felony drug offenses (5 students, or 9.1%), arson (3 students, or 5.5%), and assault (2 students, or 3.6%). Compared to JJAEP referrals during 1996-97 (when discretionary offenses were not allowed except court-ordered), the offenses for which students were referred most often to JJAEP included: felony drug offenses (50%), weapons possession (27.8%), court-ordered persistent misconduct (11.1%), assault (5.5%), and arson (5.5%) (see Appendix B).

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Table 4: JJAEP Participant Offenses, 1997-98

Offense	Number	Percent
Persistent Misconduct*	34	61.8%
Possession of Prohibited Weapon	11	20.0%
Felony Drug Offense	5	9.1%
Arson	3	5.5%
Assault	2	3.6%

*Discretionary offense, allowed for first time in 1997-98
Source: JJAEP Data Files

ACADEMIC GOALS AND MEASURES

The academic goals of the JJAEP are to ensure students are on grade level or moving toward grade-level performance, and to help students transition successfully back to their home campus. During the removal period, each JJAEP student received instruction and training in interdisciplinary curricula that focused on core academic areas (mathematical literacy, reading comprehension) as well as critical learning and communication skills (thinking, decision making, oral and written skills). Pro-social behaviors and life management skills also were integrated into the curricula.

Several steps were taken to assess the program's academic goals. Upon entering JJAEP, students were tracked on several academic measures. Attendance rates in JJAEP were calculated, as well as average length of stay and average number of absences from the program. With school district and parental permission granted for 1997-98 JJAEP participants, academic indicators (e.g., current grade level assigned and TLI scores) were gathered from the home school districts prior to students' entry in JJAEP. In addition, many students had the opportunity to take the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) while in JJAEP. Upon entry to JJAEP, and prior to returning to their home school district, students were tested using the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT), to get an indication of academic progress while in JJAEP. Another indicator followed was dropout rate.

JJAEP ATTENDANCE AND PLACEMENTS

JJAEP attendance and absence data for JJAEP participants is shown in Table 5. For 1997-98 JJAEP participants, the shortest student removal to JJAEP was 17 days, and the longest removal period was 181 days. The average attendance rate (percentage of time a student was in JJAEP) for 1997-98 was 79%. For student absences, the average number of days absent was 15.3 days. The average number of excused absences (e.g., illness, detention) was 10.7 days. The average number of excused days students spent in juvenile detention was six. Finally, the average number of unexcused absences was 4.7 days.

After completing JJAEP, students went to different placements. For 1997-98, there was only one student who dropped out from JJAEP; this individual was 18 years of age and no longer under court order to remain in JJAEP. Following JJAEP, seven students returned to their home school district entering regular classes. Three entered a summer jobs program. Two entered substance abuse treatment. One each entered an alternative education program and the Texas

Youth Commission facility. Finally, one entered a state hospital, and another entered the Del Valle Opportunity Center.

As shown in Table 5, for 1996-97 JJAEP participants, the average attendance rate was 87% (minimum 18, maximum 199). The average number of absences was 9.3 days (data on average excused and unexcused absences not available). The 1996-97 JJAEP participants were followed up during 1997-98 for placements after JJAEP. Two entered residential treatment; three were sent to the Texas Youth Commission (one was released); two students dropped out; and one student was believed to have moved out of the county. All other students returned to regular classes.

Table 5: JJAEP Student Attendance and Absence, 1996-97, 1997-98

Year	Shortest Removal Period (Days)	Longest Removal Period (Days)	Average Attendance Rate (Percent)	Average Absences (Days)	Average Excused Absences (Days)	Average Excused Absences Detention (Days)	Average Unexcused Absences (Days)
1996-97	18	199	87%	9.3	NA*	NA*	NA*
1997-98	17	181	79%	15.3	10.7	6	4.7

*NA Some data not available.

Source: JJAEP Data Files

District Grade Level and Special Education Classification

As shown in Table 6, the distribution of district-assigned grade levels for students entering JJAEP during 1997-98 indicated that most students were in seventh, eighth, or ninth grade. During 1996-97, most JJAEP participants were eighth or ninth graders.

Table 6: Grade Level Distribution of JJAEP Participants, 1996-97, 1997-98

Grade Level	1996-97	1997-98
5	0	1
6	0	1
7	5	13
8	15	15
9	9	15
10	7	7
11	0	3
12	0	0

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Of the 55 students who attended JJAEP during 1997-98, 18 students, or 32.7%, had a special education classification of Learning Disabled (9), Emotionally Disturbed (4), or Other Handicap Impaired (5). Special education classification information is not available for 1996-97 JJAEP participants.

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WIAT Performance

JJAEP student participants were administered six subtests of the WIAT, an academic standardized assessment test, upon entry and exit from JJAEP. The different WIAT subtests include basic reading, reading comprehension, spelling, writing, math operations, and math reasoning. For the purposes of this report, only the basic reading and math operations components will be discussed. The WIAT was developed and has been tested for reliability and validity using national samples of students. It is intended for use as a general assessment of basic academic skills. WIAT scores are most commonly reported in two ways: grade level equivalents, and standardized scores.

Grade Level Equivalents

Actual grade levels of students upon entry to JJAEP were compared with their average tested grade level equivalents (GLEs) as determined by the WIAT, both at entry to and exit from JJAEP. On the basic reading component of the WIAT, average tested GLEs upon entry to and exit from JJAEP are shown in Table 7. All average GLEs for Basic Reading pre- and post-tests were below the actual grade levels of students. Yet, seventh-, eight-, and ninth-grade JJAEP students, on average, demonstrated gains on the WIAT Basic Reading component, while fifth- and tenth-grade JJAEP students showed average losses. Some caution should be taken in the interpretation of this data. For example, the WIAT GLE norms were developed based on a national sample of students in those grade levels. The factors that determine the academic performance of a national sample may not be equivalent to those requirements in Texas schools (e.g., TEKS) which determine students' actual grade level assignments.

As shown in Table 8, the average GLEs on pre- and post-test WIAT Math Operations showed, on average, slight gains among eighth, ninth and tenth graders in JJAEP, while fifth and seventh graders showed, on average, a slight decrease. Except for the single fifth grader tested, the average GLEs for JJAEP students tested were below the actual grade level of those students. Once again, the same cautions that were mentioned above should be taken in interpreting this data.

Table 7: Average WIAT Pre- and Post-Test Grade Level Equivalents (GLE) on Basic Reading

Actual Grade Level at JJAEP Entry	Average WIAT Basic Reading Pre-test GLE	Average WIAT Basic Reading Post-test GLE	WIAT Basic Reading Pre-Post Difference in GLEs
5	4.20	3.80	- 0.40
7	6.49	6.92	0.43
8	6.91	7.19	0.28
9	6.92	7.60	0.68
10	5.04	4.90	- 0.14

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Table 8: Average WIAT Pre- and Post-Test Grade Level Equivalents (GLE) on Math Operations

Actual Grade Level at JJAEP Entry	Average WIAT Math Operations Pre-test GLE	Average WIAT Math Operations Post-test GLE	WIAT Math Operations Pre-Post Difference in GLEs
5	5.90	5.39	- 0.51
7	6.10	5.91	- 0.19
8	6.49	6.63	0.19
9	6.85	7.01	0.16
10	4.52	5.0	0.48

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Standard Scores

Based on standard scores, performance on the WIAT can be examined in relation to national norms. Statistically, these data are more reliable than GLEs for comparisons. The WIAT normal range of academic functioning is considered to be between the 25th and 75th percentiles (i.e., standard score of 90-110, mean of 100, standard deviation of 15). Low performance is considered less than the 25th percentile, and high performance is considered above the 75th percentile.

On the WIAT Basic Reading component, average pre-test and post-test standard scores are shown in Table 9 for each grade level of JJAEP students tested. Parallel to the GLE Basic Reading data, JJAEP students in grades seven, eight, and nine showed increases in average standard scores, while students in grades five and ten showed decreases in average standard scores. The average standard scores for JJAEP students in grades seven, eight and nine were within the average range (25th to 75th percentile, standard score 90-110). However, the range of individual student scores for students in these grades was from 62 (low performance) to 113 (high performance). The average standard scores for JJAEP students in grades five and ten were below the 25th percentile (below 90). However, the range of individual student scores for students in these grades was from 65 (low performance) to 105 (average performance).

Table 9: Average WIAT Pre- and Post-Test Standard Scores on Basic Reading

Actual Grade Level at JJAEP Entry, 1997-98	Average WIAT Basic Reading Pre-test Standard Score	Average WIAT Basic Reading Post-test Standard Score	WIAT Basic Reading Pre-Post Difference in Standard Scores
5	87.0	83.0	- 4.0
7	90.8	91.8	1.0
8	90.9	91.1	0.2
9	89.4	90.8	1.4
10	75.2	74.2	- 1.0

Source: JJAEP Data Files

The WIAT Math Operations average pre- and post-test standard scores are shown in Table 10 for JJAEP students tested. From pre- to post-test, gains in average standard scores were found among eighth, ninth and tenth graders, while decreases in average standard scores were found among fifth and seventh graders. Except for the single fifth grader who performed within the average percentile range, all other average pre- and post-test standard scores fell below the average percentile range (25% to 75%). However, the range of individual student scores for

students in grades seven through ten was from 49 (low performance) to 113 (high performance). Thus, some students performed below the average percentile range, while others scored within and above the average percentile range.

Table 10: Average WIAT Pre- and Post-Test Standard Scores on Mathematical Operations

Actual Grade Level at JJAEP Entry, 1997-98	Average WIAT Math Operations Pre-test Standard Score	Average WIAT Math Operations Post-test Standard Score	WIAT Math Operations Pre-Post Difference in Standard Scores
5	100.0	92.0	- 8.0
7	83.9	80.7	- 3.2
8	82.1	84.2	2.1
9	83.5	85.8	2.3
10	67.2	68.8	1.6

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Mandatory – Discretionary Comparisons

Since 61.8% of 1997-98 JJAEP participants were sent for discretionary-removal offenses (e.g., persistent misconduct), a comparison of average WIAT pre-test standard scores was done for mandatory students and discretionary students tested upon entry to JJAEP. In Table 11, the average WIAT Basic Reading standard scores for all ninth and tenth graders were below 90 (average performance range). The average WIAT Basic Reading standard scores for mandatory students were higher than for discretionary students at grades seven, nine, and ten.

Table 11: Average WIAT Pre-test Basic Reading Standard Scores, Mandatory vs. Discretionary, 1997-98 JJAEP Participants

Actual Grade Level	Average WIAT Basic Reading Pre-test Standard Score		
	Mandatory	**Discretionary**	**Difference**
5	99.0	NA	-
7	92.0	90.1	1.9
8	86.6	93.2	- 6.6
9	89.1	88.7	0.4
10	85.8	76.0	9.8
11	NA	85.0	-

Source: JJAEP Data Files

In Table 12, where comparisons were possible between mandatory and discretionary students in the same grade level (seven, eight, and nine), the average WIAT Math Operations pre-test standard scores for mandatory students were above those for discretionary students. Overall, few average standard scores fell within the average range (standard score of 90-110). Comparing mandatory and discretionary students, the average standard scores for mandatory seventh graders and discretionary eleventh graders were within the average percentile range. All other averages were measured below the 25th percentile.

Table 12: Average WIAT Pre-test Math Operations Standard Scores, Mandatory vs. Discretionary, 1997-98 JJAEP Participants

Actual Grade Level	Average WIAT Math Operations Pre-test Standard Score		
	Mandatory	Discretionary	Difference
5	76.0	NA	-
7	92.0	82.3	9.7
8	83.5	80.5	3.0
9	83.5	79.6	3.9
10	74.4	74.5	- 0.1
11	NA	93.0	-

Source: JJAEP Data Files

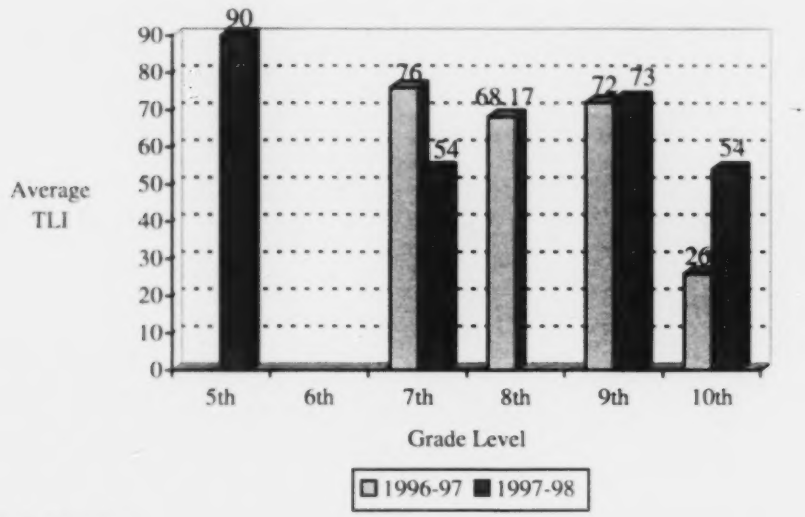
TAAS Performance

TAAS performance was another academic indicator followed on JJAEP participants. If students took the TAAS during the 1996-97 and/or 1997-98 school years, this information was requested from each school district that sent students to JJAEP. In some instances, JJAEP students took TAAS while in JJAEP. Not all data are complete for several reasons. Some students did not take TAAS during one or the other year due to exemption (e.g., special education classification), invalid test, absence, or non-testing grade level (e.g., ninth grade). Other data were not available (at the time of this report) due to difficulty in obtaining complete information from all participating school districts. Average TAAS Texas Learning Index (TLI) scores among JJAEP students are reported for the following sub-tests: Reading and Math. To pass TAAS, a student must achieve a minimum TLI of 70 for Reading or Math.

Among 1997-98 JJAEP participants who had TLI scores reported (six TLI Reading scores), Figure 3 shows the average TLI Reading scores by grade level from the data available for both 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Overall, there was mixed performance among students, depending on the year the test was taken and the grade level examined. For example, in grades five and nine during 1997-98, only one TLI score was reported in each grade, and both of these were passing scores, yielding a 100% passing rate for these two grade levels. For grades seven and ten in 1997-98, the average scores shown in Figure 3 represent a range of scores for several students, yielding a 0% passing rate.

The 1996-97 TLI Reading scores indicate average TLI scores for 19 of the 1997-98 JJAEP students in the year prior to their entry to JJAEP. For instance, among 1997-98 JJAEP seventh graders, the average TLI Reading score for those tested during 1996-97 was 76, a passing score, but the range of individual student TLI scores was from 49 (not passing) to 89 (passing). Among 1997-98 JJAEP eighth graders, the average TLI Reading score for those tested during 1996-97 was 68.17 (not passing), with a range of 37 (not passing) to 98 (passing). Among 1997-98 JJAEP ninth graders, the average TLI Reading score for those tested during 1996-97 was 72 (passing), with a range of 37 (not passing) to 86 (passing). Finally, only one 1997-98 JJAEP tenth grader's TLI Reading score was reported for 1996-97 (26, not passing).

Figure 3: Average TLI Reading Score, by Grade Level, 1997-98 JJAEP Participants

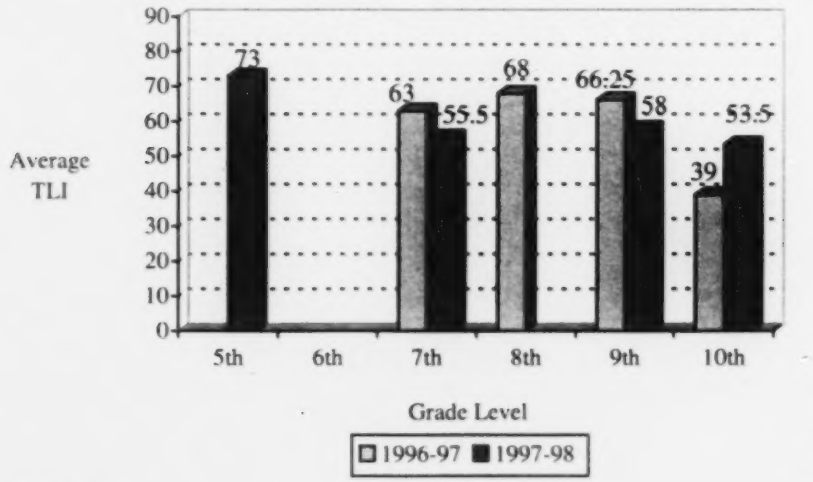


Source: JJAEP Data Files

Among the six TLI Math scores reported for 1997-98 JJAEP participants (see Figure 4), all but one of the mean TLI Math scores for students during 1997-98 were below the 70 passing level. The only passing TLI Math score was one fifth grade student who had a score of 73 during 1997-98. Among the 17 reported 1996-97 TLI Math scores of 1997-98 JJAEP students (who were tested in the year prior to their entry to JJAEP), all mean scores reported were below the passing score, although some ranges did include individuals who had passing scores. For example, among seventh graders who were tested in 1996-97, the mean TLI Math score was 63 (not passing), with a range of 51 (not passing) to 83 (passing). Among eighth graders tested in 1996-97, the average TLI Math score was 68 (not passing), with a range of 50 (not passing) to 85 (passing). Among ninth graders testing during 1996-97, the mean TLI Math score was 66.25 (not passing) with a range of 49 (not passing) to 75 (passing). Last, there was only one tenth grader who was tested during 1996-97, with a score of 39 (not passing).

Mean TAAS TLI Reading and Math scores for those students in JJAEP during 1996-97 can be found in Appendix C. Where data were available, the average TLI Reading scores during 1997-98 were at or above the passing level (70) only for eighth graders. The mean TLI Math scores during 1997-98 were at or above the passing level only for eighth and ninth graders. For 1996-97 test scores, the mean TLI Reading score for ninth graders was above the passing level; all other average scores were below the passing level.

Figure 4: Average TLI Math Score, by Grade Level, 1997-98 JJAEP Participants



Source: JJAEP Data Files

BEHAVIORAL GOALS AND MEASURES

The behavioral goal of the JJAEP is for students not to commit any new offenses. This translates into lower recidivism rates for court placements, JJAEP removals, and removals to alternative schools in the home district. Therefore, behavioral indicators were gathered from home districts and JJAEP records on any discipline removals during and after JJAEP.

Among 1997-98 JJAEP participants, only one student was returned to the JJAEP during 1997-98 for a removable offense (burglary of habitation). This represents a recidivism rate of only 1.8% for 1997-98 JJAEP participants.

Recidivism during the 1997-98 school year for those students in JJAEP during 1996-97 was 33.3% (12 of 36). Although none of these students returned to JJAEP for 1997-98, four of these students, or 11%, entered an alternative education program for offenses such as persistent misconduct. The recidivism by offense for these students can be found in Appendix D.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The evaluation was intended to assess the JJAEP and its students during the 1997-98 school year, and thereby establish a baseline on which to track the long-term academic and behavioral progress of JJAEP participants. During 1997-98, a total of 55 students were served by the JJAEP, an increase of 19 students from the number served by JJAEP during 1996-97. Part of this increase was due to the fact that school districts could send students for discretionary offenses (e.g., persistent misconduct) for the first time during 1997-98, in this case the majority of JJAEP participants (61.8%). Mandatory offenses for which 1997-98 JJAEP students were referred include weapons possession (20%), drug offenses (9.1%), arson (5.5%), and assault (3.6%).

The goals of the JJAEP were focused on improving students' academic and behavioral skills. To these ends, students received interdisciplinary instruction during their JJAEP participation, and students' academic and discipline indicators were assessed prior to, during, and following JJAEP participation. Among 1997-98 JJAEP participants, 32.7% were classified as special education students. When examining academic progress indicators, two data sources were used: WIAT and TAAS. Several highlights from the WIAT data include:

- On average, students showed gains in reading and math standard scores from pre-test to post-test.
- A number of students' pre- and post-test WIAT standard scores indicated that they were in the low performance range.
- With few exceptions, there were more mean standard scores for mandatory students than for discretionary students within the average performance range (25^{th} – 75^{th} percentiles).

There are few inferences that can be made from the TAAS data since very few scores were available, either due to non-reporting, student exemption from testing (e.g., special education), non-testing grade level, invalid tests, or absences. Furthermore, there was mixed performance among students, depending on year tested and grade level examined.

Examining discipline data, there was only one 1997-98 JJAEP student who returned to the JJAEP during 1997-98, yielding a 1.8% recidivism rate. Following up on 1996-97 JJAEP students, none returned to the JJAEP in 1997-98 for new offenses committed, and only four were enrolled in their district's alternative education programs for discretionary offenses such as persistent misconduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of reviewing evaluation findings, the following recommendations for JJAEP are offered for consideration:

- Add a pre- and post-test behavioral measure to assess the emotional and behavioral improvement of JJAEP students while in the program. A suggested inventory to use is Auchenbach's Children Behavior Checklist.
- Smooth student transition back to the home school district by communicating and facilitating individualized student academic and behavioral plans.
- Streamline the data collection process between participating school districts and the JJAEP by:
    - ensuring parent permission is granted in writing for the release of district data on students at the time of enrollment to JJAEP, or have it court-ordered as needed;
    - making participating districts aware in advance of the types of student data required;
    - receiving initial academic data from participating districts at the time a student enters the JJAEP.
- Track long-term attendance progress of JJAEP students by obtaining school district attendance rates for JJAEP students prior to their entry to JJAEP and upon their return to the district until the time that they graduate from or leave the school district.
- Track long-term academic progress of JJAEP students on TAAS scores once they leave JJAEP and until they graduate from school or leave the school district.
- Track long-term behavioral progress of JJAEP students by obtaining any discipline referral information (e.g., alternative education program, Texas Youth Commission, etc.) from school districts once students leave JJAEP and until they graduate from school or leave the school district.
- Obtain follow-up information from probation officers on juvenile offenses/placements once students leave JJAEP (e.g., additional offenses committed, Texas Youth Commission placement, substance abuse treatment center placement).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXCERPTS FROM THE TEXAS EDUCATION CODE

From Texas Senate Bills 1 (1995) and 133 (1997)

Sec. 37.007 Expulsions for Serious Offenses.

(a) A student shall be expelled from a school if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:
  (1) uses, exhibits, or possesses:
    (a) a firearm as defined by Section 46.01 (3), Penal Code;
    (b) an illegal knife as defined by Section 46.01 (6), Penal Code, or by local policy;
    (c) a club as defined by Section 46.01 (1), Penal Code; or
    (d) a weapon listed as a prohibited weapon under Section 46.05, Penal Code;
  (2) engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of:
    (a) aggravated assault under Section 22.02, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code, or aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021, Penal Code;
    (b) arson under Section 28.02, Penal Code;
    (c) murder under section 19.02, Penal Code, capital murder under Section 19.03, Penal Code, or criminal attempt, under Section 15.01, Penal Code, to commit murder or capital murder;
    (d) indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code; or
    (e) aggravated kidnapping under Section 20.04, Penal Code; or
  (3) engages in conduct specified by Section 37.006 (a) (2) or (3), if the conduct is punishable as a felony.

(b) A student may be expelled if the student, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:
  (1) sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses or is under the influence of any amount of:
    (a) marihuana or a controlled substance, as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or by U.S.C. Section 801 et seq;
    (b) a dangerous drug, as defined by Chapter 483, Health and Safety Code; or
    (c) an alcoholic beverage, as defined by Section 1.04, Alcoholic Beverage Code; or
  (2) engages in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable glue or aerosol paint under Sections 485.031 through 485.035, Health and Safety Code, or relating to volatile chemicals under Chapter 484, Health and Safety Code

(c) A student may be expelled if the student, while placed in an alternative education program for disciplinary reasons, continues to engage in serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the district's student code of conduct.

(d) A student may be expelled if the student engages in conduct that contains the elements of any offense listed in Subsection (a) against any employee in retaliation for or as a result of the employee's employment with a school district.

(e) In accordance with federal law, a local education agency, including a school district, home-rule school district, or open-enrollment charter school, shall expel a student who brings a firearm, as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 921, to school. The student must be expelled from the student's regular campus for a period of at least one year, except that:
  (1) the superintendent or other chief administrative officer of the school district or of the other local education agency, as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 2891, may modify the length of the expulsion in the case of an individual student;

(2) the district or other local education agency shall provide educational services to (the) an expelled student in an alternative education program as provided by Section 37.008 if the student is younger than 10 years of age on the date of expulsion; and

(3) the district or other local education agency may provide educational services to an expelled student who is older than 10 years of age in an alternative education program as provided in Section 37.008.

(f) A student who engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of criminal mischief under Section 28.03, Penal Code, may be expelled at the district's discretion if the conduct is punishable as a felony under that section. The student shall be referred to the authorized officer of the juvenile court regardless of whether the student is expelled.

(g) A school district shall inform each teacher of the conduct of a student who has engaged in any violation listed in this section. A teacher shall keep the information received in this subsection confidential. The State Board of Educator Certification may revoke or suspend the certification of a teacher who intentionally violates this subsection.

(h) Subject to Subsection (e), notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, a student who is younger than 10 years of age may not be expelled for engaging in conduct described by this Section.

Sec. 37.011 Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

(a) The juvenile board of a county with a population greater than 125,000 shall develop a juvenile justice alternative education program, subject to the approval of the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. The juvenile board of a county with a population of 125,000 or less may develop a juvenile justice alternative education program. A juvenile justice alternative education program in a county with a population of 125,000 or less:

(1) is not required to be approved by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission; and

(2) is not subject to Subsection (c), (d), (f), or (g).

(b) If a student is expelled from school under Section 37.007 (a) (d) or (e) the juvenile court shall:

(1) if the student is placed on probation under Section 54.04, Family Code, order the student to attend the juvenile justice alternative education program in the county in which the student resides from the date of disposition as a condition of probation, unless the child is placed in a post-adjudication treatment facility.

(2) if the student is placed on deferred prosecution under Section 53.03, Family Code, by the court, prosecutor, or probation department, require the student to immediately attend the juvenile justice alternative education program in the county in which the student resides for a period not to exceed six months as a condition of the deferred prosecution; and

(3) in determining the conditions of the deferred prosecution or court-ordered probation, consider the length of the school district's expulsion order for the student.

(c) A juvenile justice alternative education program shall adopt a student code of conduct in accordance with Section 37.001.

(d) A juvenile justice alternative education program must focus on English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and self-discipline. Each school district shall consider course credit earned by a student while in a juvenile justice alternative education program as credit earned in a district school. Each program shall administer assessment instruments under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, and shall offer a high school equivalency program. The juvenile board or board's designee, with the parent or guardian of each student, shall regularly review the student's academic progress. In the case of a high school student, the board or the board's designee, with the student's parent or guardian, shall review the student's progress towards meeting high school graduation requirements and shall establish a specific graduation plan for the student. The program is not required to provide a course

necessary to fulfill a student's high school graduation requirements other than a course specified by this subsection.

(e) A juvenile justice alternative education program may be provided in a facility owned by a school district. A school district may provide personnel and services for a juvenile justice alternative education program under contract with the juvenile board.

(f) A juvenile justice alternative education program must operate at least:
  (1) Seven hours per day; and
  (2) 180 days per year.

(g) A juvenile justice alternative education program shall be subject to a written operating policy developed by the local juvenile justice board and submitted to the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission for review and comment. A juvenile justice alternative education program is not subject to a requirement imposed by this title, other than a reporting requirement or a requirement imposed by this chapter or by Chapter 39.

(h) Academically, the mission of juvenile justice alternative education programs shall be to enable students to perform at grade level. For purposes of accountability under Chapter 39, a student enrolled in a juvenile justice alternative education program is reported as if the student were enrolled at the student's assigned campus in the student's regularly assigned education program, including a special education program. Annually the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, with the agreement of the commissioner, shall develop and implement a system of accountability consistent with Chapter 39, where appropriate, to assure that students make progress toward grade level while attending a juvenile justice alternative education program. The Texas Juvenile Probation Commission shall adopt rules for the distribution of funds appropriated under this Section to juvenile boards in counties required to establish juvenile justice alternative education programs. A student served by a juvenile justice alternative education program on the basis of an expulsion under Section 37.007 (a), (d) or (e) is not eligible for Foundation School Program funding under Chapter 42 or 31.

(i) A student transferred to juvenile justice alternative education program must participate in the program for the full period ordered by the juvenile court unless the student's school district agrees to accept the student before the date ordered by the juvenile court. The juvenile court may not order a period of transfer under this section that exceeds the term of any probation ordered by the juvenile court.

(j) A juvenile board in a county with a population greater than 125,000 shall establish a juvenile justice alternative education program not later than September 1, 1996. A student who engages in conduct described by Section 37.007 before the date on which a juvenile justice alternative education program for the county in which the student resides begins operation shall be expelled for a period not to exceed one year. This subsection expires September 1, 1997.

(k) Each school district in a county with a population greater than 125,000 and the county juvenile board shall annually enter into a joint memorandum of understanding that:
  (1) outlines the responsibilities of the juvenile board concerning the establishment and operation of a juvenile justice alternative education program under this section;
  (2) defines the amount and condition of payments from the school district to the juvenile board for students of the school district served in the juvenile justice alternative education program whose placement was not made on the basis of an expulsion under Section 37.007 (a), (d) or (e);
  (3) identifies those categories of conduct that the school district has identified in its student code of conduct as constituting serious or persistent misbehavior for which a student may be placed in the juvenile justice alternative education program;

(4) identifies and requires a timely placement and specifies a term of placement for expelled students for whom the school district has received a notice under Section 52.041 (d), Family Code;

(5) establishes services for the transitioning of expelled students to the school district prior to the completion of the student's placement in the juvenile justice alternative education program;

(6) establishes a plan that provides transportation services for students placed in the juvenile justice alternative education program;

(7) establishes the circumstances and conditions under which a juvenile may be allowed to remain in the juvenile justice alternative education program setting once the juvenile is no longer under juvenile court jurisdiction; and

(8) establishes a plan to address special education services required by law.

(l) The school district shall be responsible for providing an immediate educational program to students who engage in behavior resulting in expulsion under Section 37.007 (b), (c) and (f) but who are not eligible for admission into the juvenile justice alternative education program, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding required under this section. The school district may provide the program or the school district may contract with a county juvenile board, a private provider, or one or more other school districts to provide the program. The memorandum of understanding shall address the circumstances under which such students who continue to engage in serious or persistent misbehavior shall be admitted into the juvenile justice alternative education program.

(m) Each school district in a county with a population greater than 125,000 and the county juvenile board shall adopt a joint memorandum of understanding as required by this section not later than September 1 of each school year.

(n) If a student who is ordered to attend a juvenile justice alternative education program moves from one county to another, the juvenile court may request the juvenile justice alternative education program in the county to which the student moves to provide educational services to the student in accordance with the local memorandum of understanding between the school district and juvenile board in the receiving county.

(o) In relation to the development and operation of a juvenile justice alternative education program, a juvenile board and a county and a commissioners court are immune from liability to the same extent as a school district, and the juvenile board's or county's employees and volunteers are immune from liability to the same extent as a school district's employees and volunteers.

(p) If a district elects to contract with the juvenile board for placement in the juvenile justice alternative education program of students expelled under Section 37.007 (b), (c) and (f), and the juvenile board and district are unable to reach an agreement in the memorandum of understanding, either party may request that the issues of dispute be referred to a binding arbitration process that uses a qualified alternative dispute resolution arbitrator in which each party will pay its pro rata share of the arbitration costs. Each party must submit its final proposal to the arbitrator. If the parties cannot agree on an arbitrator, the juvenile board shall select an arbitrator, the school districts shall select an arbitrator, and those two arbitrators shall select an arbitrator who will decide the issues in dispute. An arbitration decision issued under this subsection is enforceable in a court in the county in which the juvenile justice alternative education program is located. Any decision by an arbitrator concerning the amount of the funding for a student who is expelled and attending a juvenile justice alternative education program must provide an amount sufficient based on operation of the juvenile justice alternative education program in accordance with this Chapter. In determining the amount to be paid by a school district for an expelled student enrolled in a

juvenile justice alternative education program, the arbitrator shall consider the relevant factors, including evidence of:

(1) the actual average total per student expenditure in the district's alternative education setting;

(2) the expected per student cost in the juvenile justice alternative education program as described and agreed on in the memorandum of understanding and in compliance with this Chapter; and

(3) the costs necessary to achieve the accountability goals under this Chapter.

(q) In accordance with rules adopted by the board of trustees for the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, a certified educator employed by a juvenile board in a juvenile justice alternative education program shall be eligible for membership and participation in the system to the same extent that an employee of a public school district is eligible. The juvenile board shall make any contribution that otherwise would be the responsibility of the school district if the person were employed by the school district, and the State shall make any contribution to the same extent as if the person were employed by a school district.

APPENDIX B: CHARACTERISTICS OF 1996-97 JJAEP PARTICIPANTS

Table 13: Gender and Ethnicity of JJAEP Participants, 1996-97

JJAEP 96-97	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Hispanic	15	41.6%	4	11.1%	19	52.8%
Anglo-American	8	22.2%	5	13.9%	13	36.1%
African-American	4	11.1%	0	0%	4	11.1%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	27	75%	9	25%	36	100%

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Table 14: Age Distribution of JJAEP Participants, 1996-97

Age	Number	Percent
17	0	0%
16	8	22.2%
15	10	27.8%
14	8	22.2%
13	8	22.2%
12	1	2.8%
11	1	2.8%
Total	36	100.0%

Source: JJAEP Data Files

Table 15: JJAEP Participant Offenses, 1996-97

Offense	Number	Percent
Felony Drug Offense	18	50.0%
Possession of Prohibited Weapon	10	27.8%
Persistent Misconduct (court-ordered)	4	11.1%
Arson	2	5.55%
Assault	2	5.55%

Source: JJAEP Data Files

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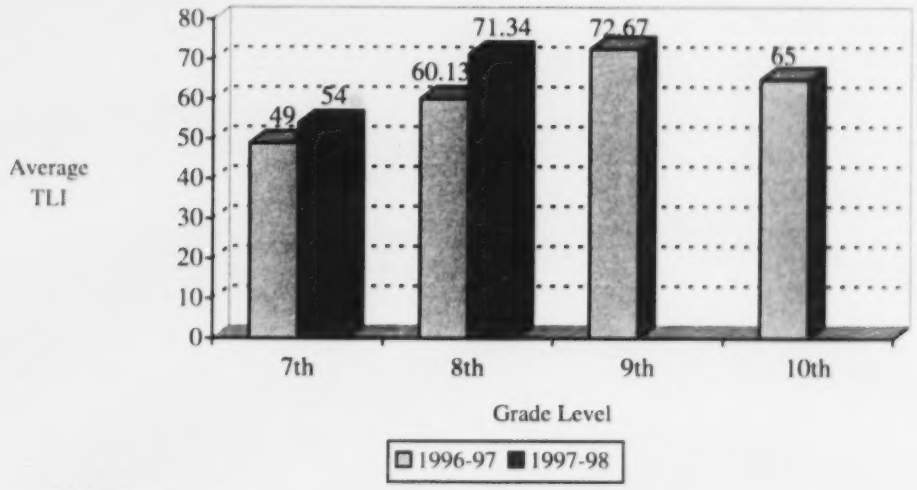
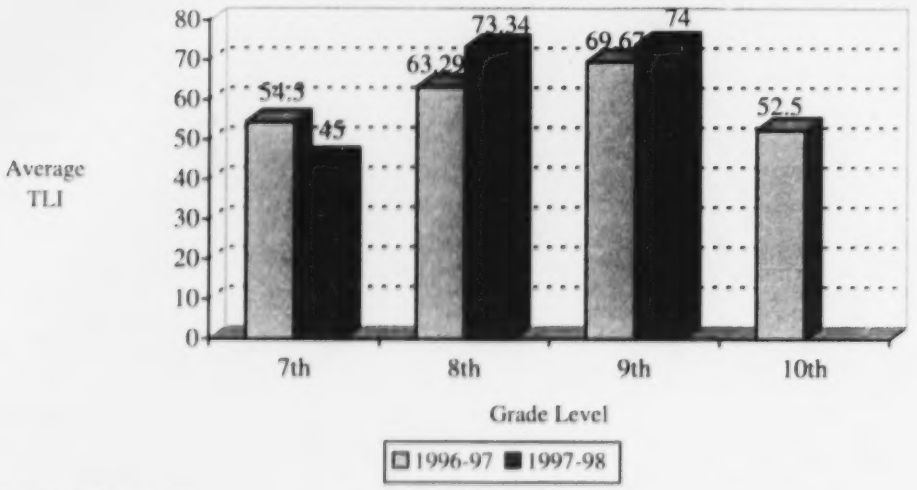
APPENDIX C: ACADEMIC MEASURES, JJAEP PARTICIPANTS, 1996-97

Figure 5: Average TAAS TLI Reading by Grade Level, 1996-97 JJAEP Participants



Source: JJAEP Data Files

Figure 6: Average TAAS TLI Math by Grade Level, 1996-97 JJAEP Participants



Source: JJAEP Data Files

APPENDIX D: BEHAVIORAL MEASURES, JJAEP PARTICIPANTS, 1996-97

Table 16: 1996-97 JJAEP Participants' Offenses During 1997-98

Offense	Number of Students
Controlled Substance or Marijuana (Felony or Misdemeanor)	6
Evading, Resisting, Hindering Arrest (Misdemeanor)	3
Burglary (Felony), Theft (Misdemeanor)	2
Assault (Felony)	1

Source: JJAEP Data Files

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REFERENCES

Senate Bill 1 (1995). Texas Education Code.

Senate Bill 133 (1997). Texas Education Code.

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